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**ADDRESS**

**BELIVERED**

**BEFORE THE YORK COUNTY  
TEMPERANCE SOCIETY,**

**AT ALFRED, FEB. 15th, 1832.**

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**BY REV. JASON WHITMAN,**  
Pastor of the Second Parish in Saco.

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**PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.**

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## ADDRESS.

MEN AND BRETHREN,

I have been requested by the officers of the York County Temperance Society, to address you on this occasion. Their request has been seconded by the promptings of my own feelings, deeply interested as they have become in the cause of Temperance. I appear before you then, animated by the humble hope, that my exertions may be crowned with that divine blessing without which all human exertions are in vain, and may be rendered subservient to the best good of society.

I need not, I trust, on this occasion, dwell upon the evils of intemperance. They have been so often and so ably depicted that I need only refer you to the discourses of others for a picture drawn to the very life, of both its immediate and its remote consequences.

Neither will you expect me to lay before you a detailed account of the exertions which have been put forth in this cause, and the success which has attended those exertions. For these exertions you have yourselves witnessed, in them you have yourselves taken an active part, and at the success which has attended them, you have yourselves rejoiced. It may be that some of you are so well satisfied with that success that you are ready to say enough has already been done; the cause is well under way, and will go on to the entire extermination of intemperance from our land, if we will but keep quiet and not push our exertions to such an extreme as to produce a reaction. If such be the feelings of any, to them I would say, the evil has indeed been checked, and greatly checked, by the exertions that have been made. But it is not banished from among us. If the use of ardent spirits

be no longer tolerated in good society, it still has its votaries in other circles; it is still spreading poverty and disease around us. Will any one then, cry peace, peace, when there is no peace? Will any one contend that the exertions which have already been put forth in this cause, should now be remitted? that continued zeal and persevering endeavor are misplaced when manifested in the cause of temperance? Oh no. The observation and reflection of every one who observes and reflects, must have taught him that intemperance is not an evil to be removed by one single effort. You will admit, I trust, that the very nature of the evil, and the character of the exertions by which alone it is to be overcome, require of the friends of temperance, a more general and a more intimate union than even now exists; more constant and persevering exertions than have yet been made.

I. First then I would say, let there be a more general and a more intimate union among the friends of Temperance. I will illustrate what I mean. Here for example is a widely extended town, divided into several school districts. In each of these districts there are several individuals, in some a larger, and in some a smaller number, who have adopted and are practicing upon the principle of total abstinence. While these act only in their individual capacity, without union of effort, or sympathy of feeling, it may indeed be well with them as individuals, but they are exerting no extensive beneficial influence upon society. But should these individuals unite in the formation of a temperance society, and unite too in earnest—not contenting themselves with merely a name, to live without vigor or energy in their operations—should they assemble often that they may increase each other's knowledge, excite each other's zeal, strengthen each other's courage, and give mutual advice in regard to each other's exertions, and should they invite their neighbors too, who have not reflected upon this subject or who have been opposed to the principle of total abstinence to attend upon their deliberations and to hear their remarks,

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they would not only stand the firmer themselves, but they would exert a powerful and a wide spread beneficial influence upon society. This then is what I would say. Let temperance societies be formed and let exertions be made to extend their limits until they shall embrace in their numbers every friend of temperance in the community. But this you will tell me is precisely what is already done. I know that it is done in some places to some extent. But I ask in how many towns in the County of York, are there already formed temperance societies? And then too as to those towns where there are temperance societies, I would ask you just to compare the number of members belonging to those societies, with the number of votes in the respective towns, and surely you will be convinced that there is room for these societies still to add to their numbers. Still further I would ask, how often do those who are members of temperance societies, assemble together for the purpose of making mutual inquiries as to the progress of the cause, of exkindling or keeping alive zeal, or of promoting increased activity of exertion? Surely you will not say that all is now done which can be effected in this cause. What I propose then is simply that the principle which has already been adopted, and the course which has already been commenced, should be practised upon and carried out to their full extent. It is nothing new or strange. Nor is it difficult in practice. You have an example of precisely the same kind of union and exertion which I propose, in the organization and the operations of your political parties. In regard to these, as you well know, there is a general and an intimate union of all the members of each political party throughout the town—nay more, throughout the County, throughout the State. Constant exertions are put forth; persevering endeavors are made to keep alive the interest and increase the numbers of the party, to diffuse among its members such political information, and such political discussions as are calculated to excite zeal, and to arouse to active exertion in the cause. This

you do, and this you feel it to be necessary to do, in order to effect the purposes of your political organization.— All that I propose is, that you should manifest similar zeal, adopt similar measures, and put forth similar exertions, in the cause of temperance. The object to be effected, is in one respect precisely the same in both cases. It is to produce a change in public opinion in regard to those particulars in which we believe it to be wrong—to keep alive interest, to excite zeal, and to arouse to active exertion in regard to those particulars in which we believe it to be right. The measures then which are found to be successful in the one case, may, if pursued with equal zeal and perseverance, be expected to be attended with the same success in the other. Let then the organization and the operations of your temperance societies, be as faithfully attended to and become as perfect and as powerful as are the organization and the operations of your political parties, and the warmest friend of temperance would ask no more. And why may we not hope that the real friends of this cause will labor here as faithfully as they are actually laboring to secure the blessings of a good government. Is not the cause equally worthy of exertions? Will you labor to secure and to transmit to your posterity the blessings of a free government, of civil liberty, and yet be content to leave them exposed to the bondage of that worst of all tyrants, Intemperance? •

But why, you may ask, the necessity, and what the advantage, of the zealous and persevering exertions I would recommend? Are not the evils of intemperance obvious to every eye? Will not the proper remedies suggest themselves to every mind? Why then should we make so much stir upon the subject, and form societies, and assemble often together to dwell upon these evils and to consult upon these remedies? These questions I will meet by asking another. Why was it that the community were so long indifferent to these evils? Was it because they did not look upon them as evils?— Was there ever a time when the respectable portion of the

community rejoiced to see their friends and neighbors becoming drunkards? when they would not have mourned with deep and heartfelt sorrow at the sad prospect of seeing their children become intemperate? Were those, who were formerly in the habitual daily use of ardent spirits themselves, who urged their friends to drink on all occasions, and who freely furnished ardent spirits to those in their employ, any the less conscientious christians *then*, than they are *now*, when they refrain from all these? These questions you will answer in the negative. Why then the difference between the former and the present times? It is owing to this same stir that has been made upon the subject. Formerly men did not reflect upon these evils, did not seek for their causes, did not enquire if there might not be a connexion between these evils and the daily practises in which they themselves were indulging. But at length this same temperance stir commenced. Inquiries were set on foot, results were stated, opinions were advanced, arguments were urged, and experiments were tried. It was discovered that by temperate drinking many were unawares led into confirmed intemperance—that ardent spirits are not necessary as a safeguard against the cold or the heat—the cloud or the sun—that man can endure more fatigue, can labor longer, and do more work in the same time, without than with the use of ardent spirits. And then too the cost was calculated, the evils were detailed, and the necessity of united exertions was pointed out. These things arrested the attention of one after another. The eyes of many were opened. The very same regard to their own best good, to the welfare of the community, to the pure and perfect will of God, as a standard of duty which before led them to avoid every thing which they then thought injurious or sinful, now leads them to adopt the principle of total abstinence. Thus did the temperance reformation commence in a stir. Thus it has progressed by making a stir, and thus it must continue to progress if it progress at all, by continuing and increasing

the stir that has been made ; by exciting still further enquiry, leading to continued thought, reflection, conversation, until the attention of all is arrested, and every member of the community is prepared to take a decided stand upon the ground of total abstinence.

Of the general advantages of temperance societies I need not speak further in detail. I will dwell for a moment upon the particular beneficial influences they are calculated to exert upon the individuals who become members of them. You all know that human resolutions are at best but frail and feeble, that we are at all times surrounded and assailed, both within and without, with temptations both powerful and alluring. Would we stand firm, then we need to encircle ourselves by all the good influences and all the restraining motives that may be brought to bear upon our minds. It is in this light, as safeguards to the individual members of them, exerting a good influence and presenting a restraining motive, that I would urge the advantage of temperance societies upon your notice. I will mention two particulars in which they may operate in this way.

If you have taken careful notice of your fellow man, you must have observed that the conduct of an individual in any given case, will depend in a great measure upon the character which that individual has assumed in society, and upon the known expectations to which his assumption of that character has given rise. There is in most minds a desire to maintain consistency of character. And this desire is often more powerful than the voice of reason, or than even the admonitions of conscience. This principle may with propriety be appealed to in the support of virtue, may be called into exercise by the influence of temperance societies. Here is a young man who has been called somewhat wild, who has indulged freely in the use of the bowl, has occasionally been seen in a state of intoxication, and who is spoken of and looked upon as one fond of high glee. He feels that such is his character, and that the opinions and ex-

pections of society in regard to him, are in accordance with that character. At length he is desirous of forsaking the follies of his youth, of devoting himself to some reputable business, of becoming a respectable and a respected member of society. He resolves to leave his dissipated associates, to change his course of conduct, to adopt and to practice upon the principle of total abstinence. But now comes the trial. His companions whom he is desirous of leaving urge him to remain with them. They say to him "you have not as yet joined a temperance society, and consequently, you have excited no new expectations in regard to your conduct. Why then need you be so particular? If you do indulge, and occasionally even to excess, it will not be thought strange in you. In times past you have done so, and yet you have been admitted into as good society, and treated with as much attention as the most sober and correct. Nor will you be thought the worse of if you now continue on in the same course. It will involve no inconsistency of character, and whatever people expect of others, they do not expect any thing else of you. The case with you, they add, is then just this. If you remain with us you will gain all the pleasures of indulgence, and will lose nothing in public estimation." Such will be their language. And what is still worse, this language will be seconded by his own feelings. Knowing what his character has been, and what are the opinions and expectations of his friends and the community in regard to him, he will feel assured that he shall really be thought no worse of for his compliance, that he shall do nothing inconsistent with his known character, nothing to disappoint the expectations of friends. This is the critical moment with him. He may when by himself, have felt strong in his resolutions. But now in the season of trial, the solicitations of the tempter are powerful and alluring. The reasons which in retirement led to his good resolutions, are now banished from his mind or appear with diminished force. And there is danger, great danger of his coun-

pliance, not indeed through any want of good desires and good resolutions, but from having endeavored to stand in the strength of those resolutions ; from having neglected to provide safeguards to encircle himself with good influences and restraining motives.

But suppose that when in retirement he formed his resolution of adhering to the principle of total abstinence, he had gone out and joined a temperance society. How different would have been his situation, how much stronger would have been his safeguards. The strength of his temptations would have been diminished. His companions feeling that it must be considered as an insult to be urged to depart from the course he had thus publicly marked out for himself, would be restrained from their earnest solicitations. But even should they solicit, he is on a safer ground than before. His desire to maintain consistency of character, which before readily assented to his compliance, now raises a powerful remonstrance against it. His knowledge of the expectations of society in regard to him, which before rather urged his compliance with the plea that he would be thought no worse of, now presents an insuperable obstacle. His self-respect, which was before hushed in silence, now raises a warning voice. He has assumed a character, he stands forth before society as the friend of total abstinence—expectations are excited, and he cannot, without doing violence to the better feelings of his own nature, conduct in a manner inconsistent with the character he has assumed, and disappoint the expectations he has excited. The very fact of his having assumed this character and excited these expectations, will prove a powerful aid to him in his endeavors.

Again, temperance societies may prove safeguards in another particular. They may provide a defence against the power of ridicule, which is sometimes brought to bear upon one who is desirous of pursuing the course of total abstinence. Here is a young farmer situated in the remote part of one of our towns. His neighbors are

all in the habitual daily use of ardent spirits. He has been led to reflect upon the subject, and has come to the conclusion to practice upon the principles of total abstinence. At length he is called to the village for the purpose of exchanging the surplus produce of his farm for the articles he may need from the merchant. Here he meets with his neighbors, who have come to the village for the same purpose. They are refreshing themselves, as they call it, with something to drink. They ask him to drink. He declines their invitation, and protests that he has no occasion for drink, that he feels not the want of it, is not in the habit of drinking, and begs to be excused.— They become more urgent, and finally resort to ridicule. They laugh at what they call his womanish whim, his childish fear of intemperance, at his want of confidence in his own moral strength, and power of self control.— There is no virtue say they in avoiding intemperance upon the principle of total abstinence. The veriest child, or the veriest old woman in the world, can practice upon this principle, and upon this principle can avoid intemperance. But, they add, true manly courage, real strength of moral principle is manifested in being able to indulge as far as the bounds of temperance will admit, and there to stand firm and unmoved. We, say they, are as adverse to intemperance as you can be. But then we will not show ourselves children. No. We will show ourselves men, not afraid to indulge where indulgence is proper, and able to withstand, where to withstand is necessary. Such is their language. And my friends, who is there I ask, and I speak to the strongest in virtue as well as to the weakest, who is there that can endure to be ridiculed, and laughed at, and pointed out with the finger of scorn, not by men concerning whose good opinion he cares not, but by his friends, his associates, those with whom he has been on terms of intimacy, by whom he has been treated with respect, and whose esteem he is still desirous of retaining? And especially who is there that can endure to be ridiculed by such, not merely for



singularity, for that perhaps we might all endure, but for a want of moral strength, of self confidence, of manliness of character? Surely such an ordeal would prove a fearful trial of the strength of the stoutest. How much then is to be feared when *he* is called to endure it, whose principles have but just taken root, and have not as yet struck deep into his heart, or sent their shoots wide over his character? What then is the most sure safeguard under such danger? Will it not consist in the thought that if he subject himself to the scorn and ridicule of these, there are others whose esteem he may secure, whose society he may enjoy, and by whose sympathy he may be cheered—others who will receive him with open arms, and by their voice and their conduct encourage him to persevere in the course he has commenced. It is often said that individuals are governed in a great degree by the voice of public opinion. But what do we mean by this same public opinion? Is it the opinion of the whole world of men, or even of the majority of the world? Surely not. Public opinion in one part of the community may speak a language entirely different from that spoken by this same public opinion in another part of the community. And so too public opinion in one class of society may speak a language entirely different from what it speaks in another, and a different class of society.—When a man passes from one sect in religion, or from one party in politics to another, he may renounce all regard for the good opinion of the sect or party he has left. But then he is influenced by a desire to enjoy the good opinion of the sect or party he has joined. He is governed by a regard for public opinion in both cases. The public whose opinion he regards, is indeed different in the one case, from what it is in the other. But the good opinion of the one enables him to support the contempt of the other. If then the young are often overcome by the ridicule of the vicious, is it not because having fallen into their society, the vicious are to them all the world, and the opinion of the vicious is to them public opinion?

And would you save them, should you not introduce them into the society of the virtuous, that so the virtuous may be to them all the world, and the opinions and practices of the virtuous may be to them public opinion, and public fashion? And may not this principle be applied to temperance societies. Let the members of them become to the young man the public with which he is desirous of standing well. Let their opinion be the public opinion which he regards, and then will he be armed against all the attacks of ridicule which may assail him from other quarters—then will he go forth into society boldly, for he will have in view a safe retreat to which he may retire when worn down with toil, and harassed by opposition, with the confident hope of being received with kindness and sympathy—then will he press onward perseveringly, for he will feel as he goes that he is not alone, but that he carries with him the good wishes, the kind sympathies, and the fervent prayers of many who are engaged in the same glorious cause.

Thus my friends have I noticed some of the advantages to be expected from the more general prevalence, and the more vigorous exertions of temperance societies.

II. But here this question arises. On what principles shall our temperance societies be formed? Shall they be simply associations upon the general principle that we will each of us do what we can for the suppression of intemperance, or shall they be formed upon the principles of total abstinence? It may seem late in the day to start this question. But although many have adopted the principle of total abstinence, yet there are other friends to the cause of temperance who still have their doubts in regard to this as a principle of association.—How shall these doubts be met? what reason shall we give to show the propriety of forming our societies upon the principle of total abstinence?

1. I answer first, that in all cases where there are two courses which may be pursued, the one of which is safe and the other dangerous, it is the part of reasonable men

to pursue the safe course. Now it is a self-evident proposition, that if all men totally abstain, then none will become intemperate. This then is a safe course. It is a position which has been established by observation to be no less true, that if all men drink in the hope of remaining temperate drinkers, some, we know not how many or who, but some will become confirmed sots. This then is a dangerous course. Consequently if we would show ourselves reasonable men, we shall pursue the safe course, shall adopt the principle of total abstinence.

2. I answer secondly, that experiments have taught us that this is not merely the safest and best, but the only effectual course. Other principles of association have been tried, and found wanting. At the commencement of the temperance reformation, societies were formed upon other principles. Comparatively speaking but little success attended their exertions. Indeed the very nature of the case will shew that no principle but that of total abstinence can be of avail as a principle of association. Suppose, for example, that a society were formed upon the general principle of doing what we can for the suppression of intemperance, and we all join it. I may think it for my advantage to use half a pint of ardent spirits per day. You may consider it necessary to use a pint. Our neighbor on account of his hard labor over the fire or in the water, may deem it of service to use his quart a day. We are neither of us ever seen disguised, we are temperate men, *so called*. As members of the society we have joined, we are urging our neighbors to become temperate. They look to our practice to see what we mean by temperance. In accordance with our urgent solicitations, they resolve to become temperate. In pursuance of their resolve, and in accordance with the definition of temperance which our practice has given them, they restrict themselves to the use of a half pint, pint, or quart per day. Thus you perceive, that although our exertions might be attended with all the success which we could expect—although we might prevail upon men to

listen to our solicitations yet we should effect nothing in the cause of temperance. The principle of total abstinence then, is the only principle of association which can prove effectual. These it would seem, are reasons sufficient to authorize the adoption of this principle.

1. But here I shall be met with objections. Here is one who objects to the principle of total abstinence as an unsound principle. It cannot, he contends, be applied to parallel cases. Many, he adds, destroy themselves by excess in eating, yet we cannot adopt the principle of total abstinence in regard to food. Why then should we attempt to do it in regard to ardent spirits, because some destroy themselves by their use? Such is the objection. How shall it be met? I meet this objection by a full denial of its truth and force. I contend that the principle of total abstinence can be applied to every parallel case that can be produced. The case of food is by no means a parallel case. If we were to adopt the principle of abstaining entirely, not merely from ardent spirits, but from all drinks of every kind, this would be a case parallel with that of total abstinence from food. And there would be the same impossibility attending the adoption of the principle in the one case, as in the other. But the case in regard to ardent spirits is entirely different. It is just this. Here is an article of drink, which is found by well attested experiments, to be entirely unnecessary, either to give strength for labor, or to guard against danger from exposure—an article, which in the ordinary habitual use of it, is found to be in all cases, to a greater or less extent, injurious, and an article too, the free use of which is in many cases attended with the worst of consequences. From the use of this article we resolve entirely to abstain. Now if you will bring forward any parallel case, any article of food or drink, concerning which these same remarks will hold good, then this same principle will apply in all its force. If, then, it was objected that the principle of total abstinence was unsound because it would not apply to parallel cases, the very objection itself implies that if it will apply to parallel cases, it must be con-

sidered as sound. It will so apply—it is therefore sound.

2. Here is another who objects to the principle of total abstinence, as implying an utter impossibility. To talk, says he, of abstaining entirely from the use of alcohol, is an absurdity. For the alcoholic principle enters into the composition of those very substances which we use for our food. When we are refreshing and strengthening ourselves with the wheaten or the barley cake—when we partake of the brown loaf—of the roasted potato, or of the simple beverage molasses and water, we are in reality partaking of the alcoholic principle, and it matters not in what form or in what combinations we partake of it.—For, since God has diffused this principle through those very substances which he has given us for food, we may conclude that it was intended for our good, and that the *temperate* use of it is beneficial. And further, he objects that the total abstinence from an article is another, and quite a different thing from the temperate use of that same article. Such is the language of this objector. How shall it be met? In answer I contend, that the proper and *temperate* use of the alcoholic principle can, in strictness of speech, mean nothing short of entire and total abstinence from its use in a distilled form. And this position it seems to me is almost self-evident. For, when it is said that the alcoholic principle is intended for our good, because it is diffused by God through the substances we use for food, the assertion will hold true only when this principle is taken into the stomach in the proportions and combinations in which it is found in our articles of food, in which it is furnished by God. But it will not apply to the use of this principle in any new combinations in which it has not been diffused by God. We may draw an argument from the wisdom and goodness of God, to justify the ways of God in the eyes of men. But we may not argue from the wisdom and goodness of God, in justification of the inventions of men. In regard to this new combination, in which the alcoholic principle is presented in the form of alcoholic liquors, and which is to be considered not as one of the wise provisions of God,

but as one of the inventions which man has sought out, we must depend upon experiments to know whether it be injurious or beneficial. And oft repeated experiments have satisfactorily shewn, that the use of alcoholic liquors is injurious. The case then is just this. Here is the alcoholic principle, an ingredient found in combination, with other ingredients in the articles of our food. When taken in this form it is beneficial, or at least, not injurious. This principle may, by the process of distillation, be separated from the other ingredients of our food, and presented in the form of alcoholic liquors. In this form experiments have shewn that it is in all ordinary cases, more or less injurious. Now will not all readily admit that the temperate use of this principle is none other than the use of it in the combinations and proportions in which it is found in our articles of food, in which it is furnished by God—that it can in propriety of language, in strictness of speech, mean nothing short of entire abstinence from its use in a distilled form?

I would say then that he is the truly temperate man, who takes no more of the alcoholic principle into his stomach, than can be taken in the form of a wheaten cake, a brown loaf, or a roasted potato. And I would say, too, that whoever goes one step beyond this, leaves the plain and level way in which he may walk with safety, and is trying to wend his way along the sides of a steep declivity, where his path is beset with pit falls, and obstructed with stumbling blocks—where the declivity is in many cases dangerously steep and slippery—where a constant struggle is necessary to enable him to keep his stand, and where he is every moment in danger of losing his foothold, and descending rapidly into the gulf of destruction below, where thousands who have endeavored to walk in the same way have gone before him.

3. Here is another, who objects to the idea that the *temperate* should unite for the suppression of *intemperance*. Here, says he, are several of us who are temperate in the true sense of that term—we are practising upon the principles of total abstinence. But what is the

necessity or the propriety of our uniting together and forming a temperance society because others, our neighbors, are intemperate? To this objector I would appeal on the ground of his duty to others. To him I would say, we are all so constituted and so situated, that we must be dependent upon each other for much of our happiness, for much of our improvement. You look to the society around you for much of your enjoyment, and to their cheering countenance and efficient aid for much of your advancement in virtue. But have not others the same right to look to you to contribute to their happiness and to aid in their improvement? Have you not then a duty to your neighbors which you are under solemn obligations to perform? And are there no feelings of philanthropy in your bosom—no feelings of kindness to your fellow men, which will prompt you to the performance of this duty? I trust there are such feelings in your heart—that you acknowledge your obligations, and are ready to engage in active exertions, if it can be shewn that it is a duty to exert yourself in this way.

But you must be aware that the use of ardent spirits is a practice regulated in a good degree by public opinion, by the fashions of society. You must be aware, too, that your merely abstaining yourself from its use, does nothing towards changing these fashions. It does not even show that you disapprove of them. I could point you to men that have always abstained, even when it was fashionable to drink, who abstained because ardent spirits produced nausea, and they could not drink. Yet the simple fact of their abstaining did nothing towards changing the fashions of society. It did not even shew that they disapproved of these fashions. And so it would be still. You may abstain. Yet if you say nothing and do nothing to show that the reason why you abstain is because you disapprove of the use of ardent spirits as needless and dangerous, and are ready to take a decided stand against those fashions of society which encourage the use of them, you fail of discharging your duty to society.



Still further, is there not danger that if you stand aloof from temperance societies, and speak sneeringly of their exertions, your influence will actually be hostile to the cause of temperance. I do not say that you willingly favor the cause of intemperance, or that you are to be ranked among the enemies of temperance. But I do ask you if you do not involuntarily encourage such ideas and such practices in others as may lead to intemperance?—For instance, here is a young man desirous of standing well in society, but fond of an occasional glass. Yet at the present time there is so much said on this subject and so many advocates for total abstinence, that he feels somewhat unpleasantly in his course. But as he looks around, he sees men of the first respectability, who stand aloof from the exertions that are making. He at once takes up the stale cant that temperance exertions are the chimerical plans of overheated bigots and fanatics—that men of the greatest respectability, and of the most liberal minds, have nothing to do with them. It is in vain that you tell him that these very men whose example he quotes, are practising upon the most rigid principles of total abstinence. He will answer, that indeed may be true. But then there may be some particular reason for this. Surely the reason cannot be that they disapprove of the fashions of society, for if they did they would come out boldly and say so, by connecting themselves with a temperance society. Thus the young man would be encouraged to go on. Should his course end in confirmed intemperance, might he not attribute his ruin in a great degree, to the influence exerted upon his feelings and his conduct by the simple fact of your not having been a member of a temperance society—of your having spoken sneeringly of the exertions of these societies.

If then it be asked by the objector, why the temperate should form societies for the suppression of intemperance, I answer, that a regard for the good of their fellow men demands this at their hands.

4. But, says another, I am already actively exerting myself in this cause. And I think that I can do more

good by remaining as I am, than by connecting myself with a temperance society. For all that I now say or do, must be considered as coming simply from the convictions of my own mind, the promptings of my own heart, and not from my connexion with any society, or from the suggestions of others. If I speak to a man upon the subject of intemperance, he may say to me, you, sir, belong to a temperance society, and say these things as a matter of course. But as I am now situated, I can say to him in answer, no, sir, I do not belong to a temperance society. All that I say or do is simply a matter of conviction with me. It is because I have witnessed the effects of ardent spirits, and am fully convinced that the use of them is extremely dangerous and highly improper, that I would urge upon you the principle of total abstinence. Such is the answer I can give, and this answer carries with it a weight which would be lost, were I a member of a temperance society. Such is the language of the objector. How shall it be met? In answer I would say first, the force of all that you may say, the weight of the answer you may give, will depend not upon the particular words you may use, but upon the general character you sustain. If your general character be such as to convince all who know you that in every undertaking of this kind you engage only after mature deliberation, from a sense of duty and in deep sincerity of heart, that general character will give weight to whatever you may say or do. Suppose then that any individual to whom you may speak upon this subject, should reproach you with belonging to a temperance society.— Might you not give this answer. Yes, sir, I do indeed belong to a temperance society. I have become fully and deeply convinced of the evils of intemperance. I am satisfied that the use of ardent spirits is needless, injurious, dangerous. And still further, I have become fully convinced that this evil is so deeply rooted and so widely spread, so interwoven with all the customs and fashions of society, that union of effort in all the friends of temperance is absolutely necessary to effect its removal. I have, therefore, from a conviction of duty, joined a temperance society, and am endeavoring to do all in my power to discourage the use of ardent spirits. It is from the same conviction of duty, and under the influence of the same promptings of my heart, that I have at this time spoken to you. Would not this answer, I ask, give as deep an impression of your sincerity, and be attended with as much weight of influence as the other,

provided your general character of sincerity and devotion to duty were the same in the one case as in the other?

This, however, is but a partial view of the case.— This objection and answer are both confined to the few individuals with whom the objector may have direct intercourse on this subject, and over whom he may exert a direct influence in regard to it. But is there not a much larger number with whom the objector may never converse upon the subject, but over whom he is exerting an indirect influence. The individuals whose names are now published in all our papers as the officers of the Maine State Temperance Society, are, by that very publication of their names, exerting an immense indirect influence over thousands, who have never seen their faces or heard their voices. These already engaged in the cause will take courage when they learn that men of such respectability have become engaged, and those who have heretofore been indifferent or decidedly opposed, will say to themselves, here are men of the first talents, men free from all suspicion of bigotry or fanaticism, who have espoused and are ready to take the lead in this cause—surely there must be some reason for this—we will lay aside our indifference and our prejudices, and will examine the subject for ourselves. In this way an immense indirect influence is exerted. Some indeed may exert a more powerful influence than others, but all exert some. In times past many have been led into intemperance, and so ruined, by this indirect influence which has been exerted upon them. We attribute their ruin to the influence of public opinion and public fashion. What is public opinion but the opinions of separate individuals united in one irresistible stream. What is public fashion but the united practice of separate individuals. Each individual then is in part accountable for the influence of public opinion. And he who is ruined by following the voice of public opinion and public fashion, may with propriety attribute his ruin to the indirect influence of the thousands of individuals around him, whose opinions and practices have gone to make up that public opinion and public fashion. Yes, here is our neighbor who has been ruined by intemperance. Who is guilty of bringing him to ruin? You are guilty, and I am guilty, if our practices have been such as to encourage him in his course—such as to give that tone to public opinion, and that character to public fashion, which have led him to his ruin. He may never have seen or heard of you or me, may have spent his life far distant from us. Yet we are guilty, for

he has been borne down by that stream of public opinion which we have done all in our power to swell. This is a solemn thought, and shews us that the indirect influence of every individual is of indefinite extent—that no man liveth to himself. Every individual then who joins a temperance society, and thereby takes an open and decided stand in favor of total abstinence, throws the weight of the immense and indefinitely extended indirect influence which he must exert, into the scale of temperance. He does all in his power to cause the voice of public opinion and public fashion to speak audibly and decidedly in favor of total abstinence. He does all in his power to swell that voice, to give it strength and compass. But the influence which he exerts in favor of temperance who declines joining a temperance society, is mostly confined to those with whom he has direct intercourse. To this objector then I would say, even if your direct influence should be somewhat diminished by your joining a temperance society, which, however I very much doubt, your indirect influence will be so much increased and extended, that you will on the whole, do more good as a member of a temperance society than you otherwise could.

5. But the great objection, which, more than any other, deters from joining this cause, is an unwillingness to give a pledge. Many are ready to say, “we are fully convinced that the principle of total abstinence is the only correct, the only safe principle. It is the principle on which we ourselves are practising and are determined to practise. But then we will not bind ourselves, we will not surrender our liberty to any subscription—we will reserve to ourselves the right of acting in any given case as the exigencies of the case may seem to require. Such is the objection. How shall it be met? In answer I would say, that the obligation which a man is under to perform any duty to himself, does not refer to himself for its ultimate sanction. He cannot himself assume or release that obligation, weaken or strengthen its force, remit or increase its penalties. The obligation arises from the very nature he has received, and is sanctioned by penalties affixed to the violation of that nature by God himself. Take the very case we are considering, the case of intemperance as an illustration. Why is a man under obligations to live temperately? Is it not because such is the will of God, as declared in the very constitution of his nature? because from his very nature intemperance is productive of pain and misery, is destructive of all bodily, mental or moral vigor. Now can the individual, I ask, say to himself, I will remit the obligation to live temperately. I

will relax the penalties attached to the sin of intemperance? Surely not. Whatever he may wish, the penalties will still remain. They are imposed by a much higher hand than his. As soon as he becomes acquainted with these penalties, he learns the obligations he is under to avoid those practices to which they are attached as consequences. He sees in these penalties the finger of God, pointing out to him in a manner that cannot be mistaken, the course of his duty. It will make no difference then in the strength and force of the obligation itself, or in the penalties attached to the disregard of the obligation, whether he resolve to live temperately, or make no resolve upon the subject. By resolving, he does not bring upon himself obligations and duties from which he would otherwise be free. By neglecting to resolve, he does not free himself from penalties to which he would otherwise be exposed. He is in duty bound to live temperately. It is a duty which he owes to God, and from which he cannot be excused as long as the will of God declared in the very constitution of his nature, remains what it now is.—His obligation is equally binding, and the penalties will be equally severe, whether he resolve or neglect to resolve.

These remarks will hold true in regard to our duties to our fellow men. These duties do not refer to our fellow men for their ultimate sanction. Our fellow men cannot remit the obligations we are under to perform them, or relax the penalties attached to a neglect of them. These obligations arise from our natures, taken in connection with the relations we sustain towards each other, and they refer to God as their author and their ultimate sanction. Take the case of intemperance for example. As long as our natures and our relations remain what they now are, so long will the moderate use of ardent spirits be the road to intemperance—so long will the customary and fashionable use of ardent spirits, be the cause of ruin to many in society, and so long too will intemperance be attended with the infliction of great misery upon those connected with the intemperate; so long therefore it is the duty of every one who is aware of these things to avoid all use of ardent spirits himself, and to discourage it in others. And it matters not, so far as the conscience of the individual is concerned, whether his neighbors ask him to promise to perform this duty or not. He feels himself to be under an obligation which no promises to them can strengthen—an obligation that refers to a higher being than they, as its author and sanction. Thus you perceive that the very ground on which this objection rests, is untenable ground. It proceeds upon the suppo-

sition that we should be under no obligations to avoid and to discourage the use of ardent spirits, if we did not sign a paper to that effect, and join a temperance society. As well might we say that we should be under no obligation to tell the truth if we did not sign a paper containing a promise to that effect. That we are under obligation, without signing the constitution of any temperance society, and that the obligation is or ought to be equally binding with him who does not, as with him who does sign, is evident from the fact that the penalties endured by the transgressor are as great in the one case as in the other. Thus we see that abstractly considered, this objection has no weight. Let us look at it practically. It is the fear of a pledge. But does not every man of principle actually pledge himself in his own mind in regard to all his conduct? Does he not reflect upon his nature, his relations, his obligations and his duties, and when he has thus learned the course he ought to pursue, does he not resolve to regulate his future conduct by his present convictions of duty, as long as those convictions remain the same. Here he has pledged himself to himself. He goes forth into society and acts upon his resolution. By so doing does he not excite expectations, and give a tacit promise that he will continue to pursue the same course until his present convictions of duty alter. Suppose that a person resolves that he will never pledge himself to the principle of total abstinence. What does he by this resolve? Does he not lay down a rule for his future conduct, drawn from his present convictions of propriety and duty? And suppose that he express his resolution to his fellow men. Does he not by that pledge himself to them never to pledge himself to a temperance society? And what does he who joins a temperance society more than this. He resolves that he will govern his future conduct by his present convictions. He declares to his fellow men what his present convictions are, as well as his determination to practice upon them. It is understood that his determination is to adhere to his present convictions as long as they remain the same. He reserves to himself the liberty of changing his opinions, of taking off his name, and of altering his conduct, should his convictions of duty ever require it. Thus you perceive, that if you are conscientious in your regard to duty, you will pledge yourself, to yourself, in regard to this as in regard to all your conduct, and that if you conduct conscientiously and consistently, you are giving a tacit pledge to society. Instead, then, of dreading a pledge, the questions with you should be these—shall I openly pledge myself for, or

tacitly pledge myself against, this cause—or shall I prefer to pledge myself tacitly, rather than openly, to this cause?

But here you will ask, what is the advantage of joining a temperance society, and signing the constitution, if a man is under no greater obligations after he has done this than before, and if he may by his conduct tacitly pledge himself in support of the same cause without doing this? I answer that the advantage is of a two fold character—felt by society around you, as well as by yourselves. In the first place, as has been already stated, you will exert a much more widely extended influence upon society, and will thus do much more good by joining than you could do without. In the second place, as has also been stated, you will yourselves stand more firmly, not indeed because your obligations will be strengthened, but because motives which may induce you to fulfil those obligations will be multiplied and rendered more permanent and more powerful.

Thus, my friends, have I noticed as I was able, such objections as I have heard stated by respectable men. I have endeavored to meet them fairly. I have spoken as to wise men. Judge ye of the soundness and the weight of my remarks. A few words more and I have done.

I see those before me who are capable of exerting a great influence upon society—greater, perhaps, than any other class or profession. To them, the members of the bar, I give thanks for the interest they have already manifested in this cause. To them I appeal for still further exertions. And to you all, of every class, of every occupation, of every rank, to you all I appeal in behalf of human virtue and human happiness. To all I would say, look well to yourselves and to the influence you may exert. To all I would say “let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.” To all I would say, no man liveth to himself! Consider, I beseech you, how valueless all other blessings will prove, if this pestilence is suffered to remain brooding over our land. Look upon yonder inebriate, as he reels to and fro through your streets, or as he lies low in the loathsomeness of intoxication, and tell me I pray you, of what value to him are the blessings of a free government and of civil liberty.—Consider the importance of the influence you may exert. Suppose that your son, who has gone out to engage in the active duties of life, returns at length to the paternal roof the victim of intemperance—ruined in his property—ruined in his reputation—ruined in his moral strength—ruined in his hopes both for this world and the world to come—and as he returns says to you, father, my blood be



upon your head. I have been led astray by the fashions of society. Those fashions you never attempted to change for the better. In my youth, yea even in my childhood, you saw me putting the fatal cup to my lips, and never checked me for so doing—never warned me of the deadly poison at the bottom, and of my danger of drinking too deep. Nay more, did you not encourage me in my course by occasionally putting the same cup to your own lips, and to the lips of your neighbors? It is true that even in my youth a temperance society was formed in our village. But then to you I looked for an example, from you I received my impressions. I heard from your lips the keenest of ridicule and the severest of sarcasm upon those who became its members, and upon the principle of total abstinence. I heard from you the solemn pledge, given in presence of your friends and your family, and of your God, for to him you profanely appealed, that you would never pledge yourself to abstain. I caught the words from your lips, and repeated them in all the ardor of youth to my companions, and to shew the sincerity with which I adopted them as my own, I drank the more freely. But at length I felt that I was on dangerous ground. I became convinced that the only hope for me was in the adoption of the principle of total abstinence. I longed to connect myself with a temperance society, that I might be encircled with good influences and strengthened for the necessary struggle. But then, how could I depart from the pledge I had given to my young companions? How could I become one of that number whom I had heard my father ridicule? How could I meet my father, and when I heard him laugh at the bigoted and fanatical part which the members of temperance societies were acting, say to him, father, I, your son, am acting this same bigoted and fanatical part. I could not do it. I did not do it. The consequence you know. Here I am before you, ruined—a reproach and a grief to my friends, a byword in society, a burden to myself, miserable beyond the power of tongue to tell even now, and nought but tenfold anguish to expect hereafter. But, father, upon your head be my blood. Should your son under such circumstances address you in such a manner, would you think lightly of the influence exerted even by your silence and backwardness in this cause?—Oh no. God grant that we may all so conduct now and in regard to this subject, in such a manner as to be able to look back from the regions of eternity with satisfaction upon the exertions we have made and the influence we have exerted.





